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September 3, 1970

Dr. T. D. Sterling
Department of Applied Mathematics
and Computer Science
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Dear Dr. Sterling:

In The Hague I discussed your letter of August 14 with the ISI Secretary-General (Dr. Verstege), Treasurer (Dr. M.G. Kendall) and Director of the Permanent Office (Mr. J.E. Lunenberg). Their opinion was that this problem (the effects of smoking on health) is international, and that the statistical aspects could fall within the scope of ISI activities. They did not, I think, reach a considered judgment as to whether a review of the statistical data was within the resources of the ISI. (From experience on the Surgeon General's Committee I gave them my opinion that the number of published statistical studies is now large, and that the selection of papers for review and the subsequent review would require a substantial staff working for over a year. I don't think they felt well enough informed on this issue at present either to agree or disagree with my opinion).

We all agreed, however, that in its broad aspects the problem is biological rather than purely statistical and that a thorough review would require major cooperation from medical and biological experts. Consequently it was agreed that I write to Dr. Logan in Geneva to ascertain the views of W.H.O. on this problem. One possibility is that WHO and ISI might jointly supervise a review of the current evidence. If any action should be contemplated, I will consult the complete Bureau of the ISI as well as the above group of its principal officers.

I expect to be in touch with you when there is anything further to report.

Sincerely,

W. G. Cochran

W. G. COCHRAN

WGC:ac
cc. Mr. J.E. Lunenberg

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